Essential Skill: Revising Words

Curious Collections

TRANSCRIPT

HOOK 1

Hi, writers. It's Anne.

When I was young, my best friend and I loved collecting pencils. We would compete with each other for who had the most. They could be colorful, fuzzy, luxurious, or maybe even superhero themed. We just tried to find ones that were interesting and unique. People like to collect all sorts of different things.

DISCUSSION 1

Discuss: What is something you might like to collect?

HOOK 2

Maybe you said that you already collect sports cards, or that you like to collect seashells or plushy animals. You may have said something else, and that's great!

I have a friend, Siler, who has a podcast called *Curious Collections*. It's all about people who collect interesting things. A podcast is a show where people record themselves talking about a topic, then listeners can listen to it anywhere they want.

When Siler creates a new episode, she first needs to write a script. She starts with what's called a first draft, and then she'll rewrite or revise it over and over and over

again until it's exactly how she wants it to be. And because a podcast is something that you listen to, it's really important that her script describes things using lots of specific details and descriptions.

Here is a clip from one of her podcasts:

> *“New York City trash collector Nelson Molina finds hidden treasures on his daily truck route through Queens. His garage holds thirty years of special items rescued from the curb. Clocks, toys, and old antiques fill neat rows of tables and shelves, including unique pieces his coworkers discovered during their own daily routes.”*

Siler was really happy with how this clip turned out, but her first draft of the script was nothing like this final version. Here's how Siler introduced Nelson Molina in her first draft: *"Nelson Molina is a trash collector."* And here's how she introduced him in her final draft: *"New York City trash collector Nelson Molina finds hidden treasures on his daily truck route through Queens."*

DISCUSSION 2

Discuss: What's different between these two introductions?

HOOK 3

Maybe you said that the final draft uses more words or that it uses words like hidden treasures to describe things. You may have said something else, and that's great!

Siler's first description, "Nelson Molina is a trash collector," is okay. But describing him this way, a listener might imagine Nelson like this. By adding details like where Nelson is from, what Nelson finds, and when he finds them, Siler makes Nelson's description much more specific and interesting. Now a listener might imagine Nelson like this.

Whenever Siler revises a script, she starts by simply reading what she wrote over and over. This allows her to start to identify the parts or words that could be substituted or replaced.

As she reads, she first looks for words that could be revised to add more detail. Maybe a word doesn't quite capture the feeling she wants to describe.

She then looks at each sentence, making sure that the words flow together when she reads them. Are there sentences that are too short? Are there enough details in the descriptions to make everything sound interesting?

When Siler identifies something that she wants to revise, she'll underline it and then write her revision idea next to it. This helps her keep track of all the changes she wants to make.

In one episode of Curious Collections, Siler wrote about a girl named Cidrina who collects and organizes fidget toys. Siler first wrote this: "Cidrina collects things that you play with that make you feel better. She has a spot in her house where she puts her collection." This was okay, but Siler knew that this description of Cidrina could get better by revising it.

DISCUSSION 3

Discuss: How could you revise the description to make it more specific and interesting? Are there any words that you could replace with more specific ones?

HOOK 4

Maybe you said that she could use fidget toys instead of things to describe what she collects or that she could add more details about where she stores her collection. You may have said something else, and that's great!

After reading it out loud to herself, Siler identified these parts that she thought could be revised. "Cidrina collects things" didn't really describe what she collected. And "a spot in her house" didn't really describe where she kept her collection.

Siler decided to revise it by substituting certain words for more descriptive ones.

> *"Cidrina collects fidget toys that you play with that make you feel better. She has a special room where she puts her collection."*

By substituting "things" for "fidget toys" and "a spot in her house" with "a special room", it's now more specific and interesting.

Siler really liked the new changes, but then she noticed that some of the words describing how things happened could also be revised.

Siler substituted "make you" for "help you" to better explain what fidget spinners do. "Has" with "created" to better describe Cidrina's special room, and "puts" with "displays" to better describe her collection.

Here's Siler's final draft:

> *“Cidrina collects fidget toys that you play with that help you feel better. She created a special room where she displays her collection.”*

After writing, reading, revising, rereading, and revising again, Siler finally had a version that she was happy with!

Siler is now working on her next podcast script. It's about a collector who finds sea glass and then creates art and jewelry out of it. She's created a first draft, but she's not completely happy with it yet. Siler needs your help to make it more specific and interesting by substituting more specific words.

Working with a partner, you'll read her first draft, identify the parts to revise, and then rewrite it using your revisions.

I'll get you started, step by step.

STEP 1

Get your supplies.

STEP 2

In today's lesson, you'll need someone to share ideas with. This could be a partner or someone you sit near. When everyone has a partner, click the arrow to go to the next step.

STEP 3

Siler's new script is about Marilyn, a collector who finds sea glass on beaches and then turns it into jewelry and pieces of art.

Here's part of Siler's first draft script. Try to listen for parts that sound like they need to be revised.

> *"Marilyn collects sea glass. She searches places, looking for smooth pieces that the water left behind. Marilyn puts her sea glass in special wooden boxes. When she sees something really special, she sets it aside. Marilyn will then use it to make beautiful things and colorful art. She then hangs it in her yard or shows it at different fairs."*

In the "1st Draft" section of your worksheet, find sentence "1". Siler has identified some words that she feels could be revised. *"She searches places looking for smooth pieces*

that the water left behind." What are some ways to revise "places" and "water"? Maybe you want to substitute "places" for "beaches," or change "water" to "waves."

Discuss with your partner: How could you revise the underlined words to make the sentence more specific and interesting? If you need help, you can use your Idea Bank.

STEP 4

Write what you came up with in the spaces above the words you want to revise.

STEP 5

Take turns reading your revision ideas to your partner.

STEP 6

Find section "2" on your worksheet.

Siler has underlined some words to revise in this sentence. How could you revise these words to make the sentence more specific or interesting? Maybe you want to substitute "puts" with "stores," or substitute "sees" with "discovers."

Discuss with your partner: How could you revise the words that Siler has identified?

STEP 7

Write your revisions in the spaces above the sentence.

STEP 8

Take turns reading your revision ideas to your partner.

STEP 9

In the "1st Draft" section of your worksheet, find section "3."

Siler wants to revise these two sentences. Reread the sentences to yourself and then underline at least three words or parts that you want to revise. Remember to use your Idea Bank if you need help.

STEP 10

Write your revisions to the parts that you underlined in the spaces above the sentences.

STEP 11

Take turns reading your revision ideas to your partner.

STEP 12

Now it's time to take all of your revision ideas and create a new revised draft of the script.

How do the words flow when you read them? Are there enough details to make it interesting? Are the words used to describe things exciting?

Reread the entire script using all your revision ideas silently to yourself.

STEP 13

Find the "Revised Draft" section of your worksheet. Recopy the script using all of your revision notes.

STEP 14

Take turns reading your revised script to your partner.

WRAP UP

Great job, writers! By reading what you wrote, identifying things to change, and then substituting words and phrases with new ones, you've helped Siler create a much more specific and interesting final draft for her podcast.

The process of revision can be used on any type of writing. Whether it's a story, an essay, or a research paper, it can help turn any rough draft into a polished final version.

See you next time, writers.